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286 /For further information about changes and continuities in many specific aspects of
291 Kamarakoto culture from aboriginal to modern times, see categories 177 and 178,
301 pp. 273-279./
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439 Indians, but it is my impression that the trade in them is negligible. All of the things listed in this paragraph are usually obtained from the Maquiritares (Maiongones), who are the chief market of the Kamarakotos for articles of Indian consumption and the chief Indian source of imports.

439 A word of advice to future explorers in this general region may not be
435 amiss here. A few groups of Indians, who have had most contact with traders
171 and missionaries, know the value of coins (not bank notes) and will accept them, but most Indians still will not. The most useful articles of trade, because their value to the Indians is greatest in proportion to their bulk and because it is difficult to saturate the market, are small articles, such as fishhooks and needles,
[822] and beads. Beads should be small (within reasonable limits a bead's value is in inverse proportion to its size) and should be mainly or wholly blue and white, other colors being much less prized. Trade cloth should be bright red. Other colors will be accepted, but only if red is not obtainable. The Indian understanding of the value of such articles is very definite and allows the trader a wide margin of profit but does not permit him to set his own unreasonable price. Various flashy novelties may permit enormous profits because the Indians do not know their commercial value — in British Guiana Roth was offered a cow for two finger rings worth sixteen cents, and every traveler has equal or still more impressive stories to tell — but even if the traveler has no conscience in the matter, he runs the risk of finding no market at all for his novelties.[172]

439 Like all other rational beings, the Kamarakotos, and the Guiana Indians
437 in general, try to buy cheaply and sell dearly and with a long tradition of trading they are unlikely to be badly worsted in dealing with articles at all
[123] familiar to them. Acting on instructions and on praiseworthy motives but contrary to my personal opinion as to wise policy, our party did not bargain with them and established an excessively high rate for their labor and their products, but this will probably prove to be temporary and future trade should return to a basis more equitable for both sides.

Magic and Religion

121 The activities and beliefs that may be classified as religious in the broadest sense are by far the most difficult to observe and to understand in studying a foreign culture. Even students who have spent years with Carib tribes do not claim full comprehension of their religious beliefs, and it is obvious that my observations can only be superficial. They do, however, suffice to show the general type and trend of such beliefs among the Kamarakotos, despite leaving many details and general problems untouched.

Indian religious systems in general (and, sometimes less clearly, all religions) can be approximately classified as, on one hand, theistic, ritualistic,

172 [see footnote on p. 328, category 116 – Analyst]

177 drill), steel cutting implements (same functions as wood, bone, and stone implements supplemented by fire), steel fishhooks (same function as wooden hooks), enamelware and bottles (same functions as pottery and gourds), banana and cane (same function as aboriginal foodstuffs), and domestic fowl (same function as native wild birds). These can definitely replace native objects and hence do or may have a profound influence on material culture. They have the potentiality, not as yet much developed in this tribe, of modifying social culture in various directions, such as giving more leisure or creating greater dependence on trade. Such influence is, however, indirect. These innovations are acceptable mainly for the reason that they do not require any immediate, direct change in native modes of life.

Among the Kamarakotos there are as yet very few innovations that belong in the third category, evidence that their culture is still almost purely aboriginal despite the visible European influence. I am at a loss to cite any clear-cut example indubitably falling into this category except the increasing use of clothing European in general model. When they do come, innovations of this sort frequently do not merely modify aboriginal culture; they tend to destroy it and replace it by something different. Even when their effect is less drastic, it is more profound and has deeper social implications than does that of either of the first two sorts of innovations. The most important elements that might be placed in this third category are new ideas and habits of thought. It has been shown that the Kamarakotos have been more or less exposed to these, but that they have as yet generally adopted almost none.

177 The extent to which new materials and objects will be accepted and the 435 rate of adoption depend on preferability and availability. Preferability, in turn, depends in the Indian mind on many factors of which functional adaptation, esthetic appreciation, and expense (in the broadest sense) are most important. Steel-cutting implements are not better on grounds of esthetics or of expense, but they are so greatly better on functional grounds that they are incomparably preferable. Beads have little functional preferability and are extremely expensive, but they are so preferable esthetically that they are highly acceptable. Tin or enamel pots have some but not pronounced functional advantage, they are generally considered inferior esthetically, but they are sometimes cheaper than native ware for the same purpose (i.e., they often cost fewer hours of labor, whether obtained directly for labor or in exchange for other products of labor). Dresses do not, in the native mind, or do only to very slight extent, perform any useful function and they are very expensive, but they are eagerly accepted on esthetic (and in part more broadly social, but still psychological rather than material) grounds.

These considerations work both ways, of course, that is they may impede as well as promote the acceptance of innovations. Good native basketry is expensive (in labor) even to its own maker and objects as good or better functionally

177 could be obtained more cheaply by trade, but as yet no such replacement has
435 even begun because the native basketry is greatly preferred on grounds of esthetics and custom. All articles of trade are expensive and it is exceptional for them to be less so than a native article, so that this is a constant barrier to their acceptability and in general they will not be adopted unless strongly preferable functionally, esthetically, or in both these respects.

177 The outcome of innovation is conditioned by the balance of relative acceptability and availability. With such imperfect and difficult contact with the outer world, many things that would otherwise be acceptable cannot be obtained, or not in sufficient quantity. New articles filling an essential function naturally cannot and will not entirely replace articles already serving that function unless a supply equal to the demand continues over a considerable period. Flint and steel (that is, the essential import for this combination) has been available in sufficient quantities and over a sufficient period entirely to replace the fire-drill, to such an extent that fire making would now be impossible here if the supply of steel were permanently stopped. Matches are decidedly more acceptable than flint and steel, even on the score of expense, but their supply is not now and will not be for a long time sufficient to bring about total replacement.

177 It is under these conditions that materials and objects belonging to dif-
178 ferent culture levels but serving essentially the same purpose survive simultaneously. Matches have not driven out flint and steel, firearms have not replaced blowguns and bows, and enamelware has not replaced native pottery. In all these cases, and others, there is no doubt that the innovations will totally replace the surviving older articles in the natural course of events when the supply becomes adequate. Other articles that would doubtless be acceptable if supplied are still practically without any use (even in cases where they are known) because the supply is so nearly nil. Iron nails and other manufactured building materials, imported foodstuffs, domestic transport and food animals (except chickens), and many other things are in this class.

The Present Trend and the Future

The broad trend all over the Americas has been and still is for cultures ultimately European in main outlines to affect the aboriginal cultures more and more intimately and finally to absorb them. In doing so, the European cultures have always adopted more or less from the native cultures and have themselves everywhere received a distinctive American flavor not merely because of independent evolution in this hemisphere but also because of direct heritage from the Indians. This influence is very noticeable in Venezuela where European civilization has mixed intimately with that of the Indians and produced a distinctive Venezuelan culture with many aboriginal elements surviving even in

435 172. The literature, especially that of travel as opposed to scientific study, is full of ridicule of the Indians because they do not know the intrinsic worth of articles. These statements are usually naive because they show that it is the traveler, who did not know what "intrinsic worth" means. Except for jewelry and a few other uses unknown to the Indians, gold has no intrinsic worth. In our civilization, but not that of the Indians, it has an extrinsic worth as a token of the real value that it in itself does not intrinsically have. When an Indian picks up a nugget and trades it for a needle, he gets by far the best of the bargain on the basis of intrinsic worth: he gets something that he could not make and that is of great use to him for something that cost him no real work and that is worthless to him, and so gets something for nothing. It must not be supposed, however, that there are any Indians left, even beyond the limits of intensive exploration, who do not now have a better idea than this of the value (to the traveler) of gold, or of other articles of regular trade.

114 173. Koch-Grünberg, who seems to have penetrated farther than anyone
756 else into Carib religion, gives the texts of several Taurepán magic spells, but these were apparently common property and not exclusive to the piaches.

114 174. No mention was ever made of the use of a rattle, maraka, by the
534 piache and since this is almost universal and is indeed believed by some to be
755 the primary purpose of the maraka, I feared that I had missed an essential point.
[171] I now learn, however, on Koch-Grünberg's unimpeachable authority that Taurepán piaches do not use the maraka, and this must be true also of the Kamarakotos.

754 175. The following remarkable incident was related to me by Marie
123 Angel as having occurred during her previous visit to the tribe. One of the boys employed at the camp was seized by a kanaima and retired to his hammock to die. All entreaties to him fell on deaf ears and Mrs. Angel finally said in his presence, through an interpreter, that if he was going to die anyway she was not going to have him do so at length in her camp, that she was going to get a gun and if he was still in his hammock when she returned, she would put him out of his misery. When she approached with the gun, the boy suddenly sprang from the hammock and ran off, entirely cured. Since Indians do certainly die from such attacks, this anecdote is not to be taken as evidence that they are feigned.

764 176. But I did not open these because this would certainly have been re-
123 sented and the friendship of the living was far more essential to my work than this slight additional knowledge of the dead.